THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Facilities like Wheel Chair for aged and handicapped persons, a separate reservation counter for handicapped/senior citizens are available at Nagpur station. The facility of concessional travel tickets to children, aged and handicapped is also available. Besides, a quota of two Sleeper Class berths has also been earmarked for handicapped persons in the long distance Mail/Express trains originating from Nagpur station.

(c) Does not arise.

Own Your Wagon Scheme

2722. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) The year of launching 'Own Your Wagon' Scheme;

(b) the main objectives of that scheme;

(c) whether Government have made any review on the functioning of the scheme;

(d) if so, whether the objectives have been achieved;

(e) if not, whether Government propose to modify the scheme; and

(f) if so, the steps taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) 'Own Your Wagon' Scheme was lauched in the year 1992.

(b) The main objective of the scheme is to supplement the resources available with the Railways for acquisition of rolling stock and thereby enhance the rail transport capacity to meet the needs of various sections of economy by encouraging private participation in ownership of wagons.

(c) to (f) In order to make the scheme more investor friendly the scheme is constantly reviewed based on the feedback from the users. The scheme has since been modified twice in 1994 & 1997. The results of revision are encouraging.

Conversion of MG to BG in the Siliguri Alipur Duar line in NF Railway

2723. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme for conversion from MG to BG in the Siliguri Alipur Duar line in NF Railway was sanctioned;

(b) whether the funds for the same were diverted to other area;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the future plans for conversion of this line to BG; and

(d) if not, the present status and action plan to implement the gauge conversion programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The Project is included in the Budget and is to be taken up after obtaining the requisite clearances for which action has already been initiated.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The work will be started after obtaining the clearances and will take about 5 years from completion subject to availability of resources.

Small Traders Trained in Ticketless Travel

2724. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of small traders trained in ticketless travel, often travel from Tundla, Shikohabad and Aligarh to New Delhi without tickets;

(b) whether these persons force the bonafide travellers to vacate their seats and occupy the same on those routes; and